






Strategic Planning Method for Vietnamese Business Associations

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Abstract. The purpose of this research is to develop the method of organizational development strategy planning which most fits with the specific conditions of Vietnamese business associations. The results of this research may help to solve the problem of the shortage of effective organization development strategy for the associations causing the associations' functioning and developing not as expected as their important role. By using qualitative and quantitative methods including case studies, AHP and TOPSIS this research investigated the existing strategic planning methods to define the most suitable strategic planning method for the associations. Main findings of the research include (1) The matrix method should be the most suitable method for the strategic planning of Vietnamese business associations; (2) A first-ever complete method for development strategy planning have been developed and introduced for Vietnamese business associations including the procedure for implementation which matches with their own set of strategic activities; (3) The authors also contributed to the approach of multi-criteria ranking by using a combination of the ten-seed-exercise, AHP and TOPSIS with similar accuracy instead of the complicated calculation using fuzzy AHP and TOPSIS. The recommended method of strategic planning recommended by this research could be useful in applying for not only Vietnamese business associations but also to the business associations, non-profit organizations and businesses in Vietnam and the world for a sustainable development of the organizations and the economy.

Keywords: Strategy · Planning · Method · Business association · Development

1 Introduction

Business associations plays an important role in the economy, particularly for Vietnam, the country having a booming economy. Literature review shows that despite the important role Vietnamese business associations' functioning and developing are not as expected [1]. One of the revealed reasons for this status is the shortage of effective development strategy of the associations [1]. The capacity of Vietnamese business associations (VBA) including strategic management and strategic planning is weak [2]. The cause the shortage of effective development strategy is VBAs have their own set of strategic activities [1] and they have not yet defined a suitable planning method with this. Therefore, there should be research to find out the methods of organizational development strategic

planning matching with the specific conditions of VBAs. This research investigated the existing strategic planning methods and used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods including case studies, ten-seed exercise, AHP and TOPSIS to define the most suitable method for the strategic planning of VBAs.

Basing on the reviewing and ranking of existing method, the authors have developed and introduced a first-ever complete method for development strategy planning for Vietnamese business associations including the procedure for implementation which matches with their own set of strategic activities. The recommended method of strategic planning recommended by this research could be useful in applying for not only Vietnamese business associations but also to the business associations, non-profit organizations and businesses in Vietnam and the world for a sustainable development of the organizations and the economy.

In additional, the authors also contributed to the approach of multi-criteria ranking by using a combination of the ten-seed-exercise, AHP and TOPSIS with similar accuracy instead of using fuzzy AHP and TOPSIS which require complicated calculation.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Literature Review About Business Associations and Vietnamese Business Associations

Business associations are best defined as a type of social-professional organizations or non-governmental organizations, permitted to be established by the government, which have members that are businesses/ enterprises, other organizations and individuals who voluntarily contribute assets or dues for the benefit of the members and to accomplish the goals of the association as a group [3]. There are two types of business associations: (1) single-sectoral associations; and (2) multi-sectoral associations, in which, single-sectoral association is a business association operating in one industry, multi-sectoral association is an association that gathers member businesses from many different industries.

Survey of the authors in 2020 shows that there are about more than 300 VBAs working in Vietnam nowadays. They include those officially registered and non-registered ones but stably operating. These associations meet the criteria of having members who are mainly businesses; currently operating; and performing the common functions of the Vietnam VBAs. Accordingly, there are 232 single-sectoral associations (73%), 67 multi-sectoral associations (21%) and 20 other type VBAs (6%) (Table 1).

Doner and Schneider [4] through surveying of a number of business associations in many parts of the world have concluded that: Associations that can contribute to socio-economic development are usually those that are well organized, has a high number of loyal member enterprises and is capable of promoting the harmony of interests among members. Bennett [5] is an article on the factors affecting the performance of business associations in the European Union. It shows that business needs to have a certain level of service capacity to penetrate the market and influence its member enterprises.

Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and The Asian Foundation [1] through field research has identified a number of strategic activities as the best practices of VBAs and a set of tools to evaluate these seven strategic activities. The strategic activity set includes:

Table 1. VBA's population and allocation

No	Region	Type of VBAs	Number of VBAs	%
A	North		181	57%
1		Single-sectoral associations	138	43%
2		Multi-sectoral associations	28	9%
3		Others	15	5%
B	Central land		53	17%
4		Single-sectoral associations	35	11%
5		Multi-sectoral associations	18	6%
6		Others	0	0%
C	South		85	27%
7		Single-sectoral associations	59	18%
8		Multi-sectoral associations	21	7%
9		Others	5	2%
		Total	319	100%

Source: Collected and calculated by authors

- 1) Provide information (policies, laws, market information, etc.);
- 2) Facilitate the linkages between member businesses to each other and to the market;
- 3) Promote, introduce information and products of members;
- 4) Provide trainings, consultancy and transfer advanced technology;
- 5) Organizing tours for studying and sharing experience inland and abroad;
- 6) Support & advise member businesses to develop investment projects for expanding business;
- 7) Acting as a connection between member businesses and governmental agencies at all levels, especially in protecting the rights of members.

In a questionnaire survey report [6] VCCI has assessed the operation capacity of VBAs in over of Vietnam. The findings shows that beside of other weakness strategic planning capacity of VBAs only scored $\frac{1}{4}$ which is very low (Fig. 1).

The cause the shortage of effective development strategy is VBAs have their own set of strategic activities [1] and they have not yet defined a planning method suitable with this. Therefore, there should be research to find out the methods of organizational development strategic planning matching with the specific conditions of VBAs.

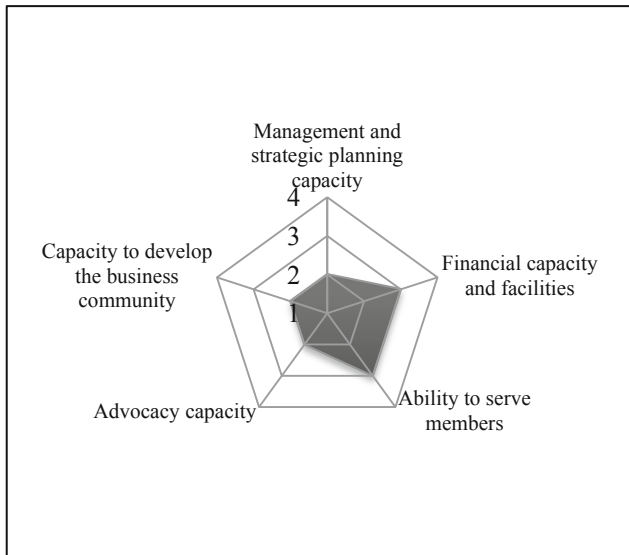


Fig. 1. The capacity of VBAs at provincial level. Source: [2]

2.2 Literature Review About Methods of Organizational Development Strategy Planning

Jay Barney [7] and Michael Porter [8] with the theoretical schools of resource management have laid the basis for the research on the internal and external environment of the organization/enterprise. The skillful combination of these two schools will help create a strategic analysis method for strategic planning purpose that is flexible and adaptable to the diverse operating environments of VBAs.

The theory of Michael Porter and Jay Barney are two different schools of resource-based development theory. In particular, Jay Barney's school is management based on resources, emphasizing the strengths and weaknesses of the business, which are the factors that makes a difference in the performance of the business; In contrast, Michael Porter's school, also known as the school of environment, deals with competitive advantage across industries and explains differences in opportunities and challenges. Combining these two theoretical schools, it helps to properly understand and apply the SWOT analysis tool. In this study, both schools of theory will be applied in the study of the development strategy planning method of VBAs.

SWOT Analysis or SWOT Matrix is the core technique in the matrix method for strategic planning. In terms of strategic analysis, SWOT is used to help an organization identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and related threats related to business competition. SWOT analysis is a useful tool for strategically positioning of businesses/organizations. In strategic solutions defining, SWOT matrix can provide the specific implications for strategic solutions including the ones taking advantage of opportunities and strengths, improving the weakness and control to limit the impacts of threats. The matrix method was introduced by many authors including Fred R. David [9].

“Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make The Leap And Others Don’T” [10] is the publication of research results by surveying many well-developed businesses in the United States over many years, in which the authors have pointed out solutions. Sustainable development strategies have been applied by successful businesses in the United States in many aspects of business activities such as human resource management, finance, leadership... The author introduced The Hedgehog Concept, in which a strategy is determined based on the coincidence of three factors (1) What are you deeply passionate about; (2) What you can be the best in the world at; (3) What drives your economics engines. The Hedgehog Concept, as a strategic planning method, will be investigate identify whether it is suitable for strategic planning of VBAs.

The Delta model of Arnolodo C. Hax [11–13] is a continuation of Jay Barney’s resource-based management theory [7] in which the strategy must create unique values for customers, systems to ensure competitiveness and sustainable development in the long term. At the same time, Delta Model also shared with M. Porter [14] about the idea of building business strategy through competition. However, a customer satisfaction and stakeholder-centric economic value creation approach has a higher potential for sustainable growth for a company, compared to with merely creating a competitive advantage and income for that company. Delta model can be applied in business strategic planning and partly in development strategy planning as well as in strategic management, especially in order to create and gain competitive advantage through strategic product, customers and business system options to create optimal profits for businesses. The approach and principles proposed by Arnolodo C. Hax, especially the customer-centricity, are very suitable for use in the strategic planning process, however, the Delta Model is in-nature approach more than an application method. Accordingly, the Delta Model approach can be fully integrated into methods such as the matrix method or the method using the Hedgehog Concept as the balance scorecard of [15]. In addition, the Delta model as a model for business strategic planning has characteristics that are somewhat unsuitable for application to VBAs in product strategy solutions where the strategic products/ activities of VBAs are clearly defined, and the mission of VBAs is not for dominance of the market as suggested by the Delta Model.

Also, a part of the matrix method for strategic planning Kaplan introduced the tool “Balanced Scorecards” [15], which requires that when planning a strategy, it is necessary to consider identifying four types of goals about: 1) Financial; (2) Customer/ Market; (3) Internal process; and (4) Learn & growth. While planning VBAs’ development strategy the Balanced scorecard should be applied as an effective tool for defining goals and solutions. As the parts of the matrix method, SWOT and Balanced scorecard will be investigated identify whether it is suitable for strategic planning of VBAs.

Philip Kotler, in his book Marketing Management [16] discussed a lot about competitive strategy and strategic analysis. One of the strategic analysis tools thoroughly introduced in this book is value chain analysis. These useful tools introduced will be applied in light of Jay Barney’s theory of resource-based management above, which will help identify tools to help analyze the internal environment of business associations, helps to identify weaknesses and strengths in the SWOT matrix while planning the VBAs development strategy.

Through literature review, it can be seen that the matrix method and the method of using the Hedgehog Concept are likely to be suitable for application in strategic planning of VBAs if used in conjunction with the balance scorecard. Therefore, the study has selected two methods of strategic planning that have the potential to be suitable for the characteristics and conditions of VBAs, namely the matrix method and the method using the Hedgehog Concept to investigate and select out the most appropriate one for developing the process and recommending VBAs to apply.

3 Methodology

3.1 Analysis Framework

See Fig. 2.

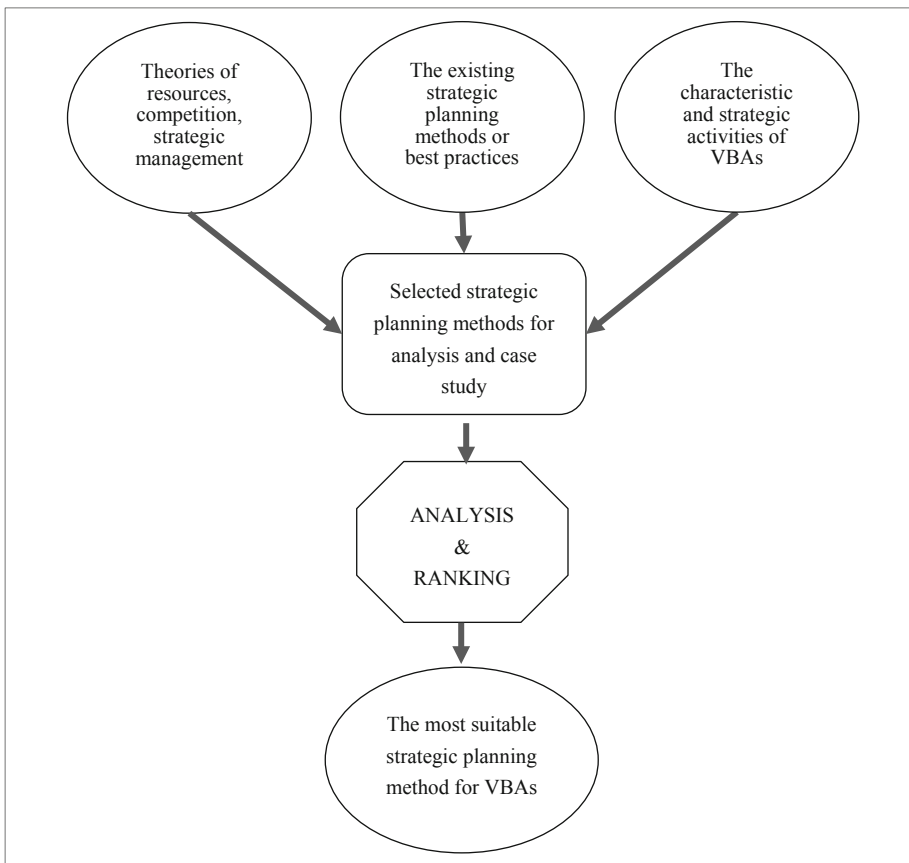


Fig. 2. The Analysis Framework. Source: The authors developed basing on literature review

3.2 Research Methods and Process

In order to collect the information and analysis the authors mostly used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods including desk research, expert consultation, case study, focus group discussions with the ten-seed exercise, AHP and TOPSIS for ranking and selecting the strategic planning methods. See Fig. 3.

Basing on literature review, expert consultation and desk research of 1) Theories of resources, competition, strategic management; 2) The existing strategic planning methods or best practices; 3) The characteristic and strategic activities of VBAs the authors would define the analysis framework, the selected strategic planning methods for analysis and case studying. The case study and the focus group discussion (FGD) with those participating in the case study would be implemented to collect information for ranking. Using the combination of the ten-seeds exercise, AHP and TOPSIS the authors calculated, ranked and select the method of strategic planning that is most suitable for VBAs. The method model and procedure would be created and recommended to VBAs.

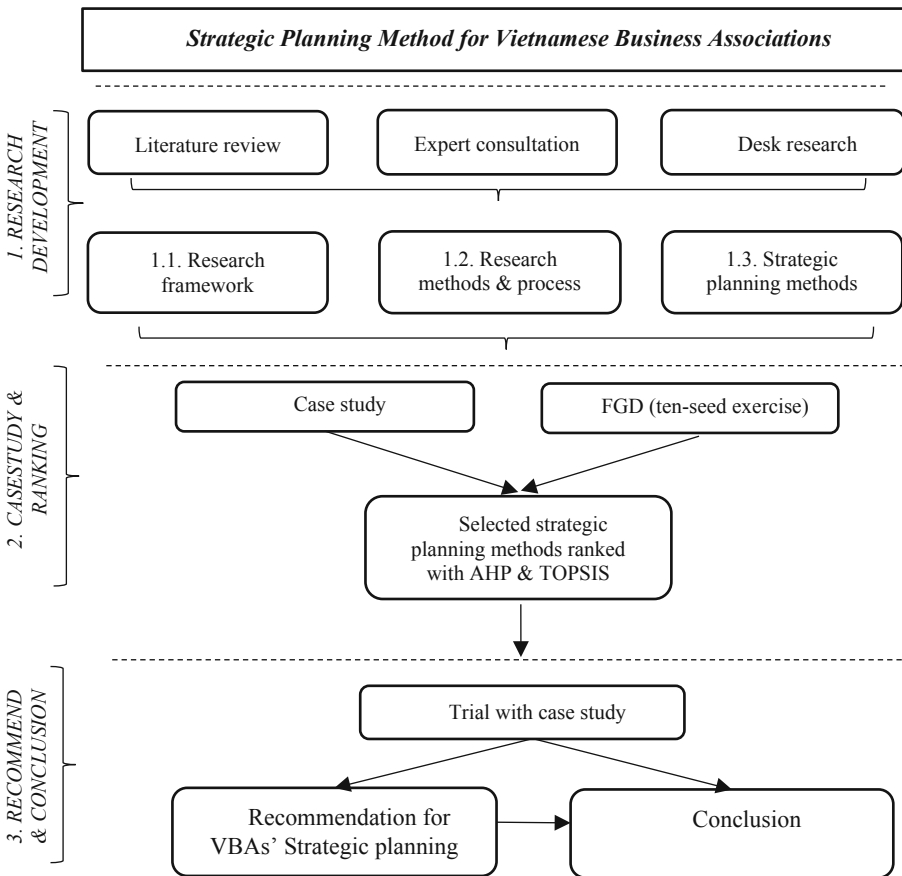


Fig. 3. The research process. Source: Developed by the authors

Once more, the recommended method of strategic planning would be applied with one VBA for trial and conclusion.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Investigation of the Methods

This session is about the investigation of existing methods for strategic planning which are potential and have been tried with business associations. The two methods were chosen for investigation are Matrix Method (including SWOT and Balanced scorecard) and The Hedgehog Concept.

The Matrix Method. The matrix method, as the name implies, uses matrices in strategic analysis and identification of strategic solutions. The first popular form of this method can be mentioned as the BCG Matrix (Boston Matrix) developed by The Boston Consulting Group. This method provides a strategic planning process that includes the following steps: 1) Set up an external factors analysis matrix; 2) Set up the internal analysis matrix; 3) Set up the combination matrix; and 4) Set up the integrated matrix. In strategic development planning, the most commonly used matrix is the SWOT matrix. This is the combination matrix used to determine the positioning of the business/organization as a basis for proposing strategic solutions [9].

SWOT matrix is a strategic analysis technique used to help an organization to position themselves in the present and future context, thereby helping to plan strategic goals in the coming period. In a SWOT analysis, strengths and weaknesses are often related to the internal environment, while opportunities and threats are often focused on the external environment. To set up a SWOT matrix, it is necessary to conduct strategic analysis activities to identify opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses. In which, the strengths and weaknesses are identified through the internal analysis. Tools such as value chain analysis [16], resource assessment with VRIN criteria [7] can be used to help identify weaknesses and strengths of an organization/ business. Opportunities and threats are identified through analysis of the external environment of the enterprise with tools such as analysis of competitive forces [17], PEST analysis [18].

In the later part of strategy development by The Matrix Method, Balanced Scorecards [17] will be used with the implications from SWOT matrix to defining solutions in four goals of 1) Financial; (2) Customer/ Market; (3) Internal process; and (4) Learn & growth.

SWOT analysis has the potential to be used as a useful tool in strategic positioning of VBAs. This will also be evident in the strategic planning approach of the business association intended to be developed by this research.

The Method using The Hedgehog Concept. The Hedgehog Concept is introduced by [10] in the book *Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make The Leap And Others Don'T* which is the result of a survey of many successful businesses in the United States, in which the authors point out strategic solutions that have been successfully applied by businesses in the United States in many aspects of business activities such as human resource management, finance, leadership, etc.

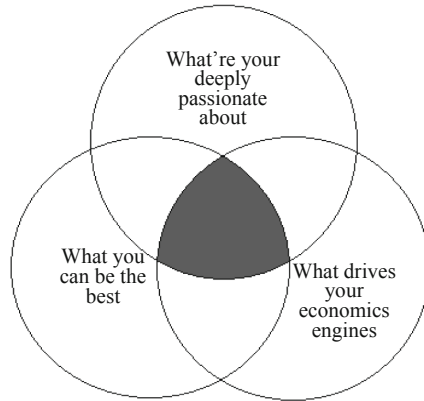


Fig. 4. The Hedgehog Concept. Source: [10]

<i>WEAKNESS</i>	<i>THREAT</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The strategic orientation capacity is still low;</i> • <i>The leadership and governance capacity is still weak;</i> • <i>Unsustainable financial capacity;</i> • <i>The capacity to provide services is weak;</i> • <i>The capacity to give opinions and make recommendations on policies and laws not yet met the requirements;</i> • <i>The capacity to build and develop the business community has not yet met the requirements of the 2012 Strategy.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The payment ability of members is limited;</i> • <i>The experience of other associations is not much to learn;</i> • <i>Members are not ready to contribute;</i> • <i>Competition from similar and related organizations;</i> • <i>Scarcity of financial resources: Vietnam is no longer considered a poor country;</i> • <i>Sponsoring is not easy for members;</i> • <i>The high salary makes it difficult to select high-quality human resources for VIPA.</i>

Fig. 5. SWOT analysis of VIPA. Source: [19]

In the strategic planning method basing on The Hedgehog Concept a strategy is determined based on the coincidence of three factors (1) What are your deeply passionate about; (2) What you can be the best in the world at; (3) What drives your economics engines. This model is quite suitable to help identify strategic solutions for VBAs in different cases (Fig. 4).

4.2 Case Study

The case of development strategy of VIPA with the matrix method. The matrix method has been tried with the case of planning the organizational development strategy for Vietnam Poultry Association (VIPA) in 2017. The trial is successful, and VIPA got an organization development strategy for the period up to now (Figs. 5 and 6).

In order to have the input for the SWOT analysis, the tools of [1] has been used to analysis for the value or strengths/ weakness of the set of strategic activities. Basing on the positioning of VIPA set by the SWOT analysis in the strategic analysis phase, the strategic objectives and solutions have been defined. The balanced scorecards were used

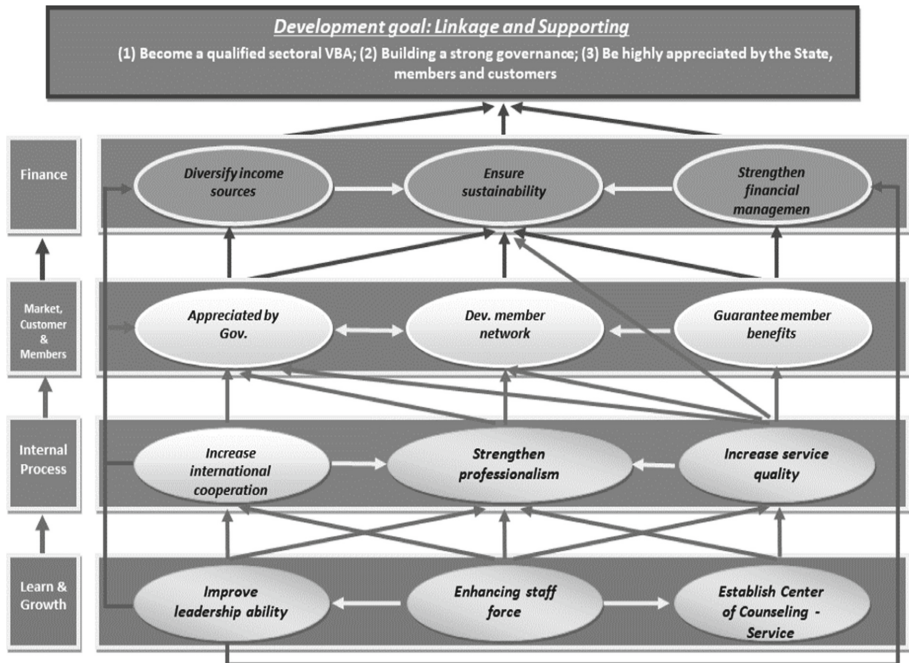


Fig. 6. The strategy map of VIPA. Source: [19]

to best illustrating the strategy map of the association into the four areas of financial, market, internal process and learn & growth as [15].

The case of applying The Method using The Hedgehog Concept and VBAs' business support strategy post-Covid-19. The selection of strategies to support businesses in pandemic response and post-Covid-19 development is based on the Hedgehog Concept proposed by [10], in which the choice of strategy depends on the following factors: (1) Strengths and core values of VBAs (What you can be the best in the world at); (2) Mission of VBAs (What are your deeply passionate about); and (3) The needs of VBAs' member businesses (What drives your economics engines). Based on this selection criteria, the businesses participating in focus group discussions were guided to discuss and compare the needs of businesses arising from Covid-19 response activities with the strategic activities of VBAs where they are the strength of the associations. Based on the criteria of the above concept, the FGD participants have built a Venn Diagram of strategic activities of VBAs to support the post-Covid-19 development activities of member businesses as shown in Fig. 8.

In fact, depending on specific conditions, many VBAs have promoted their strengths and have applied these strategic solutions in providing services to support member businesses to respond and develop post Covid-19 (Fig. 7).

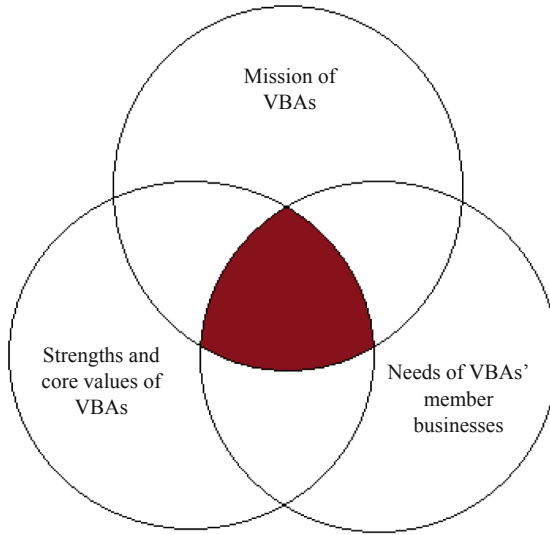


Fig. 7. The method for planning VBAs' strategy in supporting businesses to post Covid-19. Source: [20]

4.3 Ranking the Investigated Strategic Planning Methods

Developing the criteria for ranking with Ten-seed exercise. In this research, the FGD participants who had participated the two case studies, firstly, were asked to join a brainstorm to define the criteria for ranking the strategic planning methods. The brainstorm session produced the criteria including Reasonableness, Satisfy the need, Simple and easy to do, Cost feasibility, Execution time, Effective, Sustainable, Possibility to execute after build.

Then the participants were asked to carry out the Ten Seed Exercise [21] to select five criteria for the ranking of the methods. In this exercise, the proposed criteria were listed on large paper, next to draw blank cells. The FGD facilitator gave a number of similar small particles such as plant seeds, nuts, buttons, gravel, candies so that the participants of the FGD can divide the particles to the blank cells more or less corresponding to the degree of influence of each criterion to the strategic planning suitability of VBAs. Every time when a person wants to divide again, he/ she would be encouraged to present the reasons to convince other participants to agree with him/ her. The division would be stopped when all participants agrees with the division model. The number of particles in each cell will be calculated as a coefficient of each criterion. This FGD exercise is a part of the participatory learning and action approach (PLA) which is a method of information/ knowledge collection and qualitative analysis introduced by World Vision and has been widely used in FGDs to get experts/ informants to express knowledge/ information and agreed upon open discussions. The exercise is highly participatory, eliminating all hesitation when expressing personal opinions, especially exposing the tacit knowledge in each participant. The ten-seed exercise is the technique being able to help in converting the qualitative assessment such as excellent, good, bad etc. in to

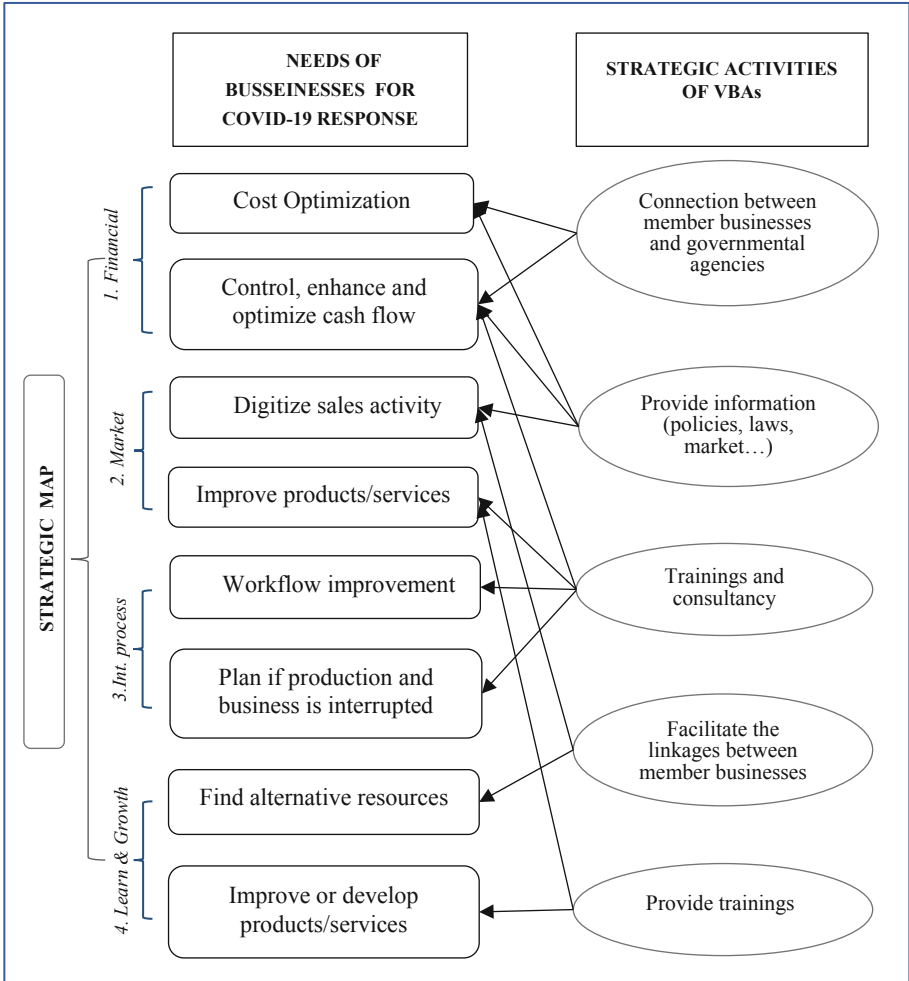


Fig. 8. Venn chart: Choosing solutions to support businesses to develop post Covid-19. Source: Authors developed based on The Hedgehog Concept [20]

normalized number score under a common view of FGD participants. This helps to avoid the complicated calculation of fuzzy AHP and fuzzy TOPSIS.

According to the FGD with the Ten-Seed Exercise, five criteria for ranking the methods were selected including Simple and easy to do (SE), Cost feasibility (CF), Execution time (ET), Sustainable (SU), Reasonableness (RE). They are the criteria ranked with highest scores. Thus, the weighting of the criteria is consistent and the set of criteria can be used to evaluate the alternatives. The result is in Table 2.

Table 2. Criteria results produced by ten-seed exercise

Item	Criteria	Ten-seed results (by no. of particles allocated)
1	SE	12
2	CF	20
3	ET	18
4	SU	17
5	RE	14

Source: Collected and calculated by authors

Table 3. The normalize pair wise comparing matrix & the weightage of criteria produced by AHP

	SE	CF	ET	SU	RE	Criterial weights
SE	0.1463	0.1463	0.1463	0.1463	0.1463	0.1463
CF	0.2439	0.2439	0.2439	0.2439	0.2439	0.2439
ET	0.2195	0.2195	0.2195	0.2195	0.2195	0.2195
SU	0.2195	0.2195	0.2195	0.2195	0.2195	0.2195
RE	0.1707	0.1707	0.1707	0.1707	0.1707	0.1707

Source: Calculated by authors

These criteria then were processed with analytic hierarchy process (AHP) [22] to calculate their weightage for ranking the two strategic planning methods in the following session. The AHP calculation confirms the consistency of the criterial with $\lambda_{max} = 5$ which is equal to the number of the criteria and the consistency ratio $CR = 0$ which is good because is below 0.1 [22] (Table 3).

Ranking to make selection. In this session the FGD participants were asked to rank each method with the ten-seed exercise again but with the selected criteria this time. According to this exercise, the Matrix method (The Matrix) is ranked higher than Method using The Hedgehog Concept (The HC). The result as in Table 4.

The collected data then were processed by the Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) [23] for defining the most suitable methods according to the AHP weighted criteria and the ten-seed ranking. The result of TOPSIS process confirms that The Matrix Method is the most suitable one for the strategic planning of VBAs. Accordingly, the research team chose Matrix Method as the core to develop Development Strategy Planning Method for VBAs (Tables 5 and 6).

According to the analysis using the combination of FGD using Ten-seeds exercise, AHP and TOPSIS, the matrix method is ranked higher the method using The Hedgehog Concept and therefore, should be select for planning strategy for VBAs. See the result as in Table 7.

The discussion about the case studies and the selection process showed that the strategic planning method applied The Hedgehog Concept is very suitable for an organization

Table 4. Method ranking by ten-seeds exercise. Unit: No. of particles allocated

Item	Criteria	The Matrix	The HC
1	SE	10	15
2	CF	8	10
3	ET	10	15
4	SU	20	5
5	RE	15	6
	Total:	63	51

Source: Collected by authors from FGD

Table 5. The rooted summation of square value by TOPSIS

	SE	CF	ET	SU	RE
The Matrix	10	8	10	20	15
The HC	15	10	15	5	6
Rooted summation of square value	18.028	12.806	18.028	20.616	16.155

Source: Calculated by authors

Table 6. Normalized decision matrix (Vector normalization) by TOPSIS

	SE	CF	ET	SU	RE
Criteria weightage by AHP	0.1463	0.2439	0.2195	0.2195	0.1707
The Matrix	0.5547	0.6247	0.5547	0.9701	0.9285
The HC	0.8321	0.7809	0.8321	0.2425	0.3714

Source: Calculated by authors

to overcome the sudden incidence such as Covid 19 where the method helps to mobilize all the best of an organization to respond to the incidence helping the organization remaining operation in shorter terms. The Method using The Hedgehog Concept was scored higher with the criteria of Simple and easy to do and Execution time. However, regarding the longer term The matrix method using SWOT matrix is more suitable as it does not only help to take the advantage of opportunities, promoting the strengths, prevent the threats but also helps to improve and control the weakness which ensure the sustainable development of the organizations.

In this kind of ranking, usually, fuzzy AHP and fuzzy TOPSIS will be used to rank the alternatives. However, it will be rather complicated to calculate with fuzzy input. The ten-seed exercise is the technique being able to help in converting the qualitative assessment such as excellent, good, bad etc. in to normalized number score under a common view of FGD participants. This helps to avoid the complicated calculation

Table 7. The weighted normalized matrix and ranking score by TOPSIS

	SE	CF	ET	SU	RE	Euclidean distance from the idle best (S_i^+)	Euclidean distance from the idle worst (S_i^-)	Performance score (P_i)	RANK
Criteria weightage by AHP	0.146	0.244	0.220	0.220	0.171				
The Matrix	0.081	0.152	0.122	0.213	0.159	0.082	0.186	0.693	1
The HC	0.122	0.190	0.183	0.053	0.063	0.186	0.104	0.359	2
The best value (V_j^+)	0.122	0.190	0.183	0.213	0.159				
The best value (V_j^-)	0.081	0.152	0.122	0.053	0.063				

Source: Calculated by authors

of fuzzy AHP and fuzzy TOPSIS but remain the accuracy. This combination could be considered a new contribution to the method of ranking alternatives of the analysis framework of this research.

4.4 Recommended Method of Strategy Planning for VBAs

The Method. Basing on the literature review, the case study and the ranking result, the author recommended to apply matrix method for planning the institution development strategy for VBAs. The method bases on the resource approach by Barney and Porter with the application of SWOT matrix, resource and value chain analysis [16], Competitive analysis with five-force analysis tools [17] for strategic and positioning the organizations; and using the problem solving science, balanced scorecards [15] and decision-making tools to define the development objectives and strategic solutions to VBAs. Specific tools for resource and value chain analysis available at [1] (Fig. 9).

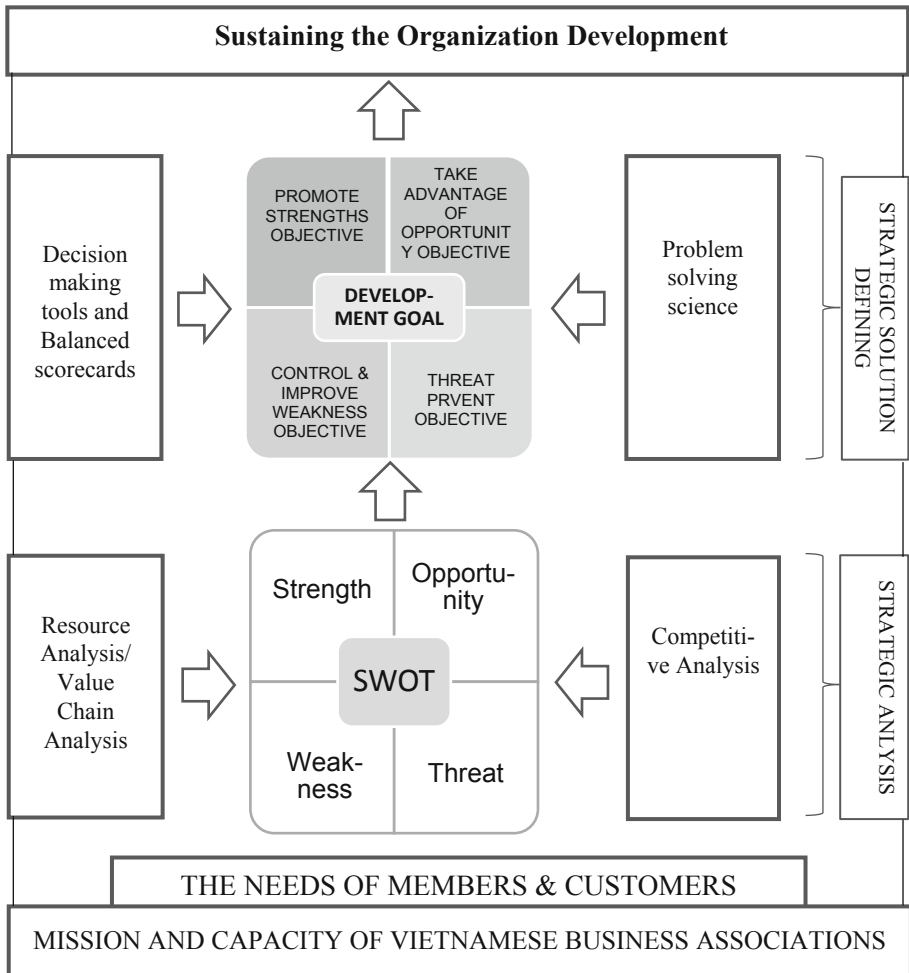


Fig. 9. The organizational development strategic planning method recommended for VBAs. Source: Developed by the authors

The Process of the strategic planning for VBAs' organizational development for a Vietnamese business association includes the following steps:

1- *Foundation Preparation*

- 1.1. Redefining the mission and functions of the VBAs (if needed);
- 1.2. Assessment of member businesses and other customers;
- 1.3. Checking and building the capacity of VBAs on strategic planning and implementation.

2- *Strategic Analysis*

- 2.1. Defining strengths and weaknesses with resource and value chain analysis (applied for the selected ones among the seven strategic activities of VBAs);
- 2.2. Defining opportunities and threats with five-force analysis tools (applied for the selected ones among the seven strategic activities of VBAs);
- 2.3. Positioning the VBA with SWOT matrix;

3- *Strategic Solutions Defining*

- 3.1. Basing on the SWOT matrix and strategic analysis to propose the strategic objectives and solutions for promoting the strengths and taking the advantage of opportunities for each of the selected ones among the seven strategic activities of VBAs;
- 3.2. Using the techniques of problem solving science to propose the strategic objectives and solutions for control and improving the weakness and preventing the threats for each of the selected ones among the seven strategic activities of VBAs;
- 3.3. Using the tool of balanced scorecard to allocate strategic objectives and solutions the into four strategic cards of financial, marketing/ customers, internal process, learning and growth as recommended by [15] for the selected ones among the seven strategic activities of VBAs;
- 3.4. Using the decision making tools to set the priorities among the selected strategic objectives and solutions;
- 3.5. Consultating and completing the strategy.

This recommended method was tried with ST Business Association which is a provincial business association of Vietnam. The organization development strategy of the association was then created and put into implementation. In order to check on the suitability of the method in reality, FGDs were done with 12 members of the association who participated in the strategic planning process with the recommended method. According to the FGD the five criteria including Simple and easy to do, Cost feasibility, Execution time, Sustainable, Reasonableness are all satisfied. In addition, the FGD participant also highly compliment the method for its comprehensiveness (Table 8).

Thus, the above strategic planning method proposed for VBAs can be considered appropriate and can be applied in practice to other associations.

Table 8. FGD to evaluate the recommended method

No.	Criteria	Number of participants agreed	% of participants agreed
1	Simple and easy to do	12	100%
2	Cost feasibility	10	83%
3	Execution time	9	75%
4	Sustainable	11	92%
5	Reasonableness	12	100%
	Average:	10,8	90%

Source: Collected and calculated by authors

5 Conclusion

Recently, the Vietnamese economy in particular and the world economy in general are undergoing great changes due to the impacts of free trade agreements, production shift, trade war, the emergence of new technologies, climate change and conflicts between countries, especially affected by the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. These changes have made significant impact on the activities of Vietnamese businesses, and at the same time, it requires the operation of VBAs to be more active and effective in order to be able to support member businesses to better adapt to the new situation. VBAs should develop effective organizational development strategy to meet this requirement.

Basing on the theories of resource management, the international experience on strategic planning, the knowledge on the operation of VBAs and by the qualitative and quantitative analysis, the authors have defined the suitable method for the organizational development strategy planning for VBAs. The recommended method and procedure will be effective tools for the VBAs. This recommended method for the organizational development strategy planning could be well applicable by not only for VBAs but also for other business associations, non-profit organizations and businesses in Vietnam and the world to develop their organizations and contribute to the sustainable development of the economy.

Due to the limit of resource the authors have not been able to implement more trials and dissemination of the recommended method for strategy planning of VBAs and to develop applicable tools for easier use of the method.

Regarding the new contribution of the research, the recommended method is the first ever completed method of strategy planning have been recommended for the VBAs and the similar organizations. The combination of the ten-seed exercise with AHP and TOPSIS in ranking could be considered a new method applied in ranking alternatives which helps to avoid the complicated calculation with fuzzy inputs but remain the accuracy.

Therefore, in the future more trials, dissemination and introduction about the method should be done to make more organization aware of and apply it. Besides, simple tools or software need developing for assisting the application of the recommended method. Future research should investigate the potential of application of the method for other organizations and businesses.

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